



NEWS RELEASE

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RIVER PARK COMMUNITY RECEIVES USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR WASTEWATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

RIVER PARK, FL, August 10, 2004 — Located along the St. Johns River, the River Park Utilities wastewater treatment system is vitally important, not only to the residents of this community, but to the environmentally sensitive St. Johns River Basin as well. In an ongoing effort to upgrade and replace the deteriorating water and wastewater systems, the River Park Utilities Management Association, Inc., has received assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development. Today's ceremonial check presentation represents just the latest in funding assistance provided to the association that is bringing much needed wastewater system improvements to the area.

River Park Utilities operates a water system financed by USDA Rural Development, and a wastewater system, that after over 40 years of use, fell into a state of deterioration and disrepair. The wastewater treatment plant was operating under a compliance schedule mandated by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to be phased out and replaced with a facility constructed and permitted under new guidelines. The new sewer treatment facility is recognized by the State of Florida as protecting the St. John's River from nearly 400 individual waste disposal systems.

Today's ceremonial check presentation represents \$765,000 (\$570,450 in grant funds and \$193,550 in loan funds) in assistance to continue improvements to the new wastewater system. Replacement of old clay sewer lines and manholes with current state-of-the-art materials will reduce system operating costs, allow the treatment plant to function at a higher efficiency level and help keep user rates down. Prior USDA Rural Development assistance for improvements to the River Park sewer system includes \$3,098,000 (\$1,969,000 in grants and \$1,129,000 in loans).

"Investing in basic community infrastructure supports President Bush's vision for a strong and vibrant rural America," said Rural Development State Director Charles Clemons, Sr. "We can never take for granted the importance of these facilities to the health and safety of our residents, to the viability of our environment, and to the sustainability of our communities."

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities and is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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